During the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session on November 10, 2001, the Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee forcefully conveyed India's point of view including our concerns on cross border terrorism.

India has welcomed international efforts including efforts under the United Nations to counter terrorism. In this framework, India has welcomed the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of September 28, 2001. India is also piloting a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) to strengthen the legal framework for countering terrorism. At the United Nations discussions on CCIT are continuing.

India supports the efforts being made by the international community, including through the UN, for the early return of peace and normalcy in Afghanistan.

Depiction of Goddess Lakshmi in objectionable terms

1257. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Goddess Lakshmi has been defined in objectionable terms in a museum in Australia; and

(b) if so, action taken to get the matter rectified?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) It has come to the notice of the Government of India that in the Gold Museum in New South Wales, Australia, captions describing Goddess Lakshmi are, *prima-facie,* objectionable.

(b) The matter was taken up by the High Commissioner of India in Australia with the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives as also directly with the Museum authorities.

Joint campaign to fight against international terrorism

†1258. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI:
DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to launch a joint campaign at international level to combat with terrorism by bringing democratic countries at one forum;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, what initiative has been taken, so far, in this regard;

(c) whether any success has been achieved as a result thereof; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) As a victim of cross border terrorism for many decades India has played an active role in drawing the international community's attention to the need to prioritise the fight against terrorism through enhanced cooperation. Over the years we have repeatedly pointed out that terrorism is a global phenomenon whose destructive reach and lethal potential has been enhanced by global networks of illicit trafficking in drug, money landering and arms smuggling. The horrific terrorist attacks on September 11 have further underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated international approach to combat terrorism.

Against this background, India has initiated a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism aimd at plugging loopholes and gaps in the 12 sectoral conventions on terrorism. In the three rounds of discussions on this Convention in the UN a high degree of convergence on most aspects of the Convention has been achieved.

The need to combat terrorism is also taken up in all bilateral interactions and Joint Working Groups on Terrorism have been set up with key countries.

There is heightened awareness and enhanced cooperation amongst the international community for combating terrorism.

Different rates for issuing passports

1259. SHRI P. N. SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have fixed different rates for issuing passport ranging from Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 depending upon the time taken to issue it;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to issue passports to the applicants within a stiuplated period at normal charges;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?